

## Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PN

SUBJECT: COMMENTARY ON TORRIJOS PRAGMATISM

SUMMARY: TORRIJOS' "NEITHER WITH THE LEFT NOR WITH THE RIGHT" POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY WAS UNDERLINED IN A FEATURE FRONT PAGE ARTICEL IN SEMI-INDEPENDENT LA ESTRELLA NOVEMBER 7. IN DESCRIBING TORRIJOS' RECENT INTERVIEWS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF LEADING US AND SOVIET PUBLICATIONS, THE ARTICLE EMPHASIZED TORRIJOS' ADHERENCE TO A NATIONALIST LINE AND QUOTED HIM THAT PANAMA SHOULD ASPIRE TO CREATE A SYSTEM INCLUDING SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES SUCH AS IS FOUND IN SWEDEN. ALTHOUGH THE TORRIJOS REVOLUTION'S SHORT-TERM COURSE OFTEN APPEARS CONFUSING, MARKED AS IT IS WITH ZIGS AND ZAGS, ITS OVERALL TRAJECTORY HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY MODERATE AND SLIGHTLY LEFT OF CENTER. HE HAS MAINTAINED POLICIES DESIGNED TO FOSTER PANAMA 'S ROLE AS A BANKING AND TOURISM CENTER ALONG WITH HIS SOCIAL REFORMS AND SPENDING ON EDUCATION, RURAL HEALTH AND LOW INCOME HOUSING. HIS OVERALL DIRECTION HAS BEEN PRAGMATIC. REFORMIST AND MODERATE. END SUMMARY.

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1. GENERAL TORRIJOS' POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY, IF ANALYZED ON

THE BASIS OF DECISIONS AND ACTIONS TAKEN DAILY OR WEEKLY, APPEARS CONFUSING. HIS SHORT-TERM COURSE IS MARKED BY ZIGS AND ZAGS WHICH MAY CONSTITUTE MEANINGFUL DEFINITIONS OF HIS PHILOSOPHY OR MAY REPRESENT MERELY POLITICALLY EXPEDIENT GESTURES. HOWEVER, THE LONG-TERM TRAJECTORY ESTABLISHED BY HIS DEEDS AND WORDS HAS REFLECTED A CONSISTENT COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL AND POLITICAL REFORM--AS EMBODIED IN THE 1972 CONSTITUTION AND THE GOP'S PROGRAMS--WHILE MAINTAINING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND FOSTERING PANAMA'S GROWTH AS A PRIVATE BANKING AND TOURIST CENTER. TORRIJOS' POLICY HAS BEEN TO CARRY OUT REFORMS WITHOUT SERIOUS SOCIAL, ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL DISRUPTIONS. THE MOST ADEQUATE SHORTHAND DESCRIPTION OF TORRIJOS' POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY REMAINS HIS SLOGAN OF "NEITHER WITH THE RIGHT, NOR WITH THE LEFT, BUT WITH PANAMA."

2. WHILE MANEUVERING TO KEEP HIS RIGHT AND LEFT FLANKS PROTECTED FROM ATTACKS, TORRIJOS CLEARLY STRIVES TO PRESENT THE 1968 REVOLUTION AS A MODERATE, SLIGHTLY LEFT OF CENTER MOVEMENT. THUS THE SPEECHES BY TORRIJOS AND PRESIDENT LAKAS ON OCTOBER 11 THIS YEAR MARKED ZIGS TO THE RIGHT AS DID THEIR RECENT ATTEMPTS TO COURT PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS GROUPS BY HOLDING SEMINARS AND MEETINGS WITH THESE GROUPS TO DISCUSS GOP ECONOMIC POLICIES AND THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY. THE VISIT BY A NATIONAL GUARD GROUP TO CUBA AND THE EARLIER MOVE TO ENTER THE NON-ALIGNED GROUP CONSTITUTED ZAGS IN THE OTHER DIRECTION. WE NOTE THAT THE RECENT TREND IN THE MANAGEMENT OF DOMESTIC AFFAIRS AND THE ECONOMY HAS BEEN TOWARD THE RIGHT WHILE INTERNATIONALLY ACTIONS HAVE TENDED TOWARD THE LEFT.

3. ILLUSTRATIVE OF TORRIJOS' DESIRE FOR HIS GOVERNMENT TO BE PROTRAYED AS NEITHER LEFTIST NOR RIGHTIST, BUT ONE WHICH IS "PLURALIST" IN DEALING WITH CAPITALIST AND SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, IS THE FEATURE PAGE 1 STORY IN NOVEMBER 7 EDITION OF THE SEMI-INDEPENDENT ESTRELLA DE PANAMA. UNDER A HEADLINE "INFORMATIONAL PLURALISM IN PRACTICE" AND A SUB-HEADLINE "WITH SOCIALISM AND DEMO-CAPITALISM" APPEARED SIDE BY SIDE PICTURES OF TORRIJOS' RECENT INTERVIEWS WITH IZVESTIA, TASS, AND HUNGARIAN NEWS CORRESPONDENTS AND WITH TOP EXECUTIVES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF TIME, ANDREW HEISKEL AND HEDLEY DONOVAN. THE ARTICLE, IN COMPARING TORRIJOS' RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS POSED BY THE NEWSMEN FROM DIFFERENT IDEOLOGICAL WORLDS, DEMONSTRATED TORRIJOS' CONSISTENCY IN EXPRESSING HIS "SIMPLE NATIONALISTIC PHILOSOPHY."

4. EXCERPTS FROM HIS RESPONSES INCLUDED: "THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS OF THIS REVOLUTION ARE NOT MATERIAL

(ONES); THE MOST SIGNIFICANT (ONE) HAS BEEN TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE MOST HUMBLE SECTORS OF OUR PEOPLE" (TO TASS). ANOTHER WAS: "WE HAVE THE SATISFACTION THAT ALMOST ONE-THIRD OF THE POPULATION OF THIS COUNTRY, 500,000 PERSONS, FIND THEMSELVES RECEIVING SOME SORT OF EDUCATION. THIS INCREASES THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THIS PEOPLE WHICH IN THE NEXT DECADE WILL HAVE REACHED A HIGH LEVEL OF MATURITY AND HAVE ELEVATED ITS STANDARD OF LIVING" (TO TIME). TORRIJOS REPORTEDLY TOLD THE US NEWSMEN THAT RATHER THAN FOLLOW DOCTRINAIRE METHODS, PANAMA SHOULD ASPIRE TO HAVE A SYSTEM OF LIFE WITH SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY SUCH AS IS FOUND IN SWEDEN.

5. THE ESTRELLA ARTICLE CONCLUDED WITH THE AFFIRMATION THAT TORRIJOS' WORDS "NEITHER WITH THE LEFT, NOR WITH THE RIGHT..." WERE NOT DEMAGOGUERY BUT GAVE FULL EXPRESSION TO HIS NATIONALIST POSITION AND POLITICAL PLURALISM. WE CONCUR THAT, DESPITE HIS ZIGZAGS, TORRIJOS' OVERALL COURSE HOLDS STEADY SLIGHTLY LEFT OF CENTER.  
JORDEN

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